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CAROLINA: THEIR ORIGINS AND
EARLY HISTORY, 1700-1830

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE LIBRARY
SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1944

By
FRANCES LANDER SPAIN

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FRANCES LANDER SPAIN

BACKGROUND

THE first English settlement in the colony of Carolina was made in 1670. The French had attempted colonization there a hundred years earlier, but the Spaniards and Indians destroyed their fort and prevented further landings. The country was beautiful and fertile, low lying and cut by many meandering streams, and ideal for the establishment of the plantation system which the English had set up in the Barbados.

From the original settlement of Charleston (first called Charlestown, but changed, in 1785, to Charleston) the colonists spread out along the coast and took up lands on the banks of the rivers. They became part of an elaborate colonization system that had been devised by John Locke and put into operation by the Lords Proprietors, a company of English lords who were promoting the colony. Large parcels of land were sold, and ownership of this land carried with it titles and rights of local rule. The size of the holdings meant that colonists were separated from each other by long distances, with often only the rivers and creeks as means of communication. This pattern of life created a powerful group of wealthy, self-sufficient country families.

Coeval with the extension of outlying

¹ A summary of a dissertation submitted to the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago in December, 1944, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

plantations in Carolina was the development of the town of Charleston. Many of the landed men participated in both movements, for they had town houses as well as country places. And it was to this town that the whole colony looked for political, economic, and social leadership.

Men from many nations made up the citizenry of Carolina. English, Huguenots, Swiss, Germans, Welsh, and the so-called "Scotch-Irish" predominated, but small groups of Quakers, Jews, and French Catholics, the famous Acadians, added their traits and traditions to produce a society that was perhaps unique in American life. By 1775 the separate racial strains had been so blended that South Carolina presented a culture distinctly its own, but it was a culture compounded of many and widely varied elements. Richard Barry has well summarized these historical characteristics of the colony:

The stamp of England was on it, as the flag of Britain flew over it, but the colorful topography with its exotic architecture supported a sociological pot into which were poured the stark practicality of the frontier, exaggerated European fashions, man's primal urge for freedom, English legal forms, the Anglo-Saxon reliance on parliamentary government, the philosopher's dream of Utopia, an exacting social background, a basic ethnic conflict, Oriental mental habits (the freeman embracing the despot), the British gift for colonization, Celtic precision and intuition, Huguenot thrift and adaptability, the Swiss, Dutch, and German talent for home-making, the Viking instinct for attack, the Quaker genius for "accommodation."²

² *Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1942), p. 18.

THE PROVINCIAL LIBRARY

The colonists were plain people and rich planters, "earnest men from every walk in life who came to seek new homes in a new country."³ Ramsay says of them: "Though few, if any, of the early settlers were learned men, yet they brought with them general ideas of European culture," and as soon as the necessities of life had been secured "they adopted measures for promoting the moral and literary improvement of themselves and particularly of the rising generation."⁴ Only thirty years after the beginning of Charleston, the Provincial Assembly had an opportunity to establish in the settlement a device by which this laudable purpose might be realized—the Provincial Library.

The story of this library goes back to England and the Reverend Thomas Bray, who was appointed, in April, 1696, official representative of the Bishop of London to the American colonies. He was not able to leave for America for several years, and during that period of waiting and preparation for his work he recognized the necessity of providing the clergy who were going to the New World with books. From this narrow idea of a clerical library Dr. Bray very quickly expanded his concept to include a provincial library for each colony and rapidly set about to accomplish it. He realized the expense entailed in establishing such libraries and sought financial help from influential patrons. In his request he said:

It will require a very considerable fund, fifty pounds worth of books being the least that can

be supposed requisite to enable a minister to discharge the Duties of this Function. Besides that in each Province it would be requisite to have a library of more Universal Learning, for the Service, and Encouragement of these who shall launch forth in the pursuit of Useful Knowledge, as well Natural as Divine.⁵

A further amplification of Dr. Bray's original plan for a "collection of books for the ministers" provided for home circulation of books from the provincial library. He said:

Standing [i.e., noncirculating] libraries will signify little in the Country where Persons must ride some miles to look into a Book; such journeys being too expensive of Time and Money, but Lending Libraries which come home to 'em without charge, may tolerably well supply the Vacancies in their own studies till such time as these Lending Libraries may be improved into Parochial Libraries.⁶

His appeal to provide enlightenment for the colonists had the support of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in the Colonies and met with generous response from the English people. By July, 1699, he had raised £2,483/15. Of this sum, the second largest part, £300, was allocated to the church in South Carolina, and 225 books were purchased with it. Even before all this money had been raised, the Reverend Samuel Marshall left England to take up his duties as minister at Charleston and brought with him the first lot of books for the new library. An entry in Dr. Bray's account book reads:

Ffor paper to Cover ye Bottoms and Sides of ye Boxes and to lay between ye Books belonging to ye Library yt was sent with Mr. Marshall to Carolina
o/2/o

³ Albert S. Thomas, "A Sketch of the History of the Church in South Carolina," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, IV (March, 1935), 4-5.

⁴ David Ramsay, *The History of South Carolina from Its First Settlement in 1670 to the Year 1808* (Charleston: David Longworth, 1809), II, 353.

⁵ Bernard C. Steiner, "Rev. Thomas Bray and His American Libraries," *American Historical Review*, II (October, 1896), 67.

⁶ Edgar Legare Pennington, "The Beginnings of the Library in Charles Town, South Carolina," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, XLIV (new ser.; April, 1934), 162.

Ffor a Truss of fine Hay to fill ye corners of
ye Boxes tite yt ye Books might not have Room
to shake o/2/o7

The South Carolina Assembly was so grateful for this spiritual and intellectual sustenance that on October 8, 1698, it appointed Captain Job Howes and Mr. Ralph Izard as a committee to write letters to

Ye Lord Bishopp of London and Doctor Thomas Bray and give them the thanks of this house for their Pious Care and Paines in Providing and sending a minister of ye Church of England and Laying a foundation for a Good and public Library.⁸

The Lords Proprietors also contributed to the library, and on November 19, 1698, a committee consisting of Mr. Robert Stevens and Captain Howes was appointed by the House to write them also expressing appreciation "for ye Generous Present of Soe Considerable Part of our Public Library."⁹ The South Carolina Assembly was unique in that it, of all the assemblies in the colonies where similar parochial libraries were established, appropriated public money toward the support of the library.

On September 20, 1698, Mr. Robert Stevens reported to the House that "their Remaines Due to Mr. . . . Clavell of London bookseller the Sume of ffifty Three pounds To be paid in London for Books Belonging to ye Library of Charles Towne in Carolina" and the House resolved at once "that ye sd ffifty Three pounds be paid."¹⁰

Another evidence of public interest in this parish library was the official recognition and legal status given to it by the

Provincial Assembly. A bill "To Secure the Provincial Library at Charles Town in Carolina" was introduced in the Assembly on November 16, 1699, and became a law of the colony on November 16, 1700.¹¹ Dr. Bray's zeal made it possible to have a library that was more than just a collection of books for the clergy, and the assistance of the Lords Proprietors and the Provincial Assembly insured its semipublic nature.

The preamble of the library law of 1700 expressed the fear that the books would "quickly be embezzled, damaged, or lost excepting a law be passed for the effectual preservation of the same," and then the law proceeded to lay down rules under which the books were to be preserved and the library was to function. A commission was appointed to have general supervision of the library, to visit it at least once a year, and to examine its books. The minister of the Church of England was to be the custodian of the collection and was required to give a receipt for the books to the commissioners and the churchwardens and to answer double for the value of books damaged, embezzled, or destroyed. The act further provided that "the Inhabitants of this Province shall have the Liberty to Borrow any Books out of the said Provincial Library, by giving a Receipt for the same to the Incumbent of Charles Town." The circulation rules allowed a folio to be kept four months and a quarto, or under, one month. Seven catalogs had to be compiled—one for the Lords Proprietors, one for the Bishop of London, one for Dr. Bray, one to be entered on the record in the office of the secretary of the province, one for the custody of the commissioners, one for the

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁸ South Carolina (Colony), *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina for the Two Sessions of 1698*, ed. Alexander S. Salley (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1913), p. 28.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

¹¹ *S.C. Statutes at Large*, Vol. VII, *Statutes Relating to the City of Charleston*, pp. 13-16. This citation covers all subsequent quotations from this Act.

churchwardens, and one for the incumbent of the church, to be kept in the library, "so any person may know what Books are contained in the said Library."

There was no appropriation of public funds for the annual support or enlargement of the library. However, the book collection was increased several times. In 1705 Colonel Nicholson, then governor of Virginia, gave thirty guineas to be laid out in books for the six parishes in South Carolina and £20 more to be distributed among the ministers who were to serve these parishes.¹² And in December of that year Mr. Thomas, rector of the church in Charleston, was sent back from England at a better salary "together with the usual allowance of £10/5 for a Library and for small books."¹³

The Provincial Library was used to such an extent that it was necessary for the Assembly to pass a supplementary library act on June 7, 1712.¹⁴ It stated that several of the books had been "lost and damnified" and that it was necessary to give "discretionary powers to the person that does keep the same to limit the use of the books if he feels that it is necessary." It also authorized the commission to meet twice a year to inspect the library and to supervise all the parochial libraries in the colony.

Though the Provincial Library must have continued to function for several years longer, no further action in regard to it was taken by the Assembly. There are no dates available by which to set the limit of the library's service; it was established by law in 1700 and it existed

for at least twelve years and probably longer. Nor is there any record of the establishment of another library until 1748, when the Charleston Library Society was organized.

THE CHARLESTON LIBRARY SOCIETY

During the first seventy-five years of its life, the colony of Carolina had weathered hurricanes, fires, attacks from Indians and pirates, scourges of yellow fever and smallpox, and internal friction, and had developed already the independence and characteristic attitudes that were to determine its subsequent actions. It had struggled with the Lords Proprietors and forced them to sell the province to the king, thus giving it direct contact with the Crown. It had organized a well-disciplined militia; had found a staple, rice; and was introducing indigo as a second staple. Colonel Purry, a Swiss promoter, described the status of the colony in 1731, when he wrote:

There are between 5 and 600 houses in Charles Town, the most of which are very costly; besides 5 handsome Churches viz: one for those of the Church of England, one for the Presbyterians, one for the Anabaptists, one for the Quakers, and one for the French. If you travel into the Country, you will see stately Buildings, noble Castles, and an infinite number of all sorts of cattle. If it be ask'd what has produced all this? the Answer is: 'Tis only the rich land of Carolina.¹⁵

As the wealth of the planters increased, their standards of living and ideas of culture expanded. They were striving, consciously or not, to rebuild in Carolina the English country life that they had left behind them. Their sons, and often their daughters, were sent back to England, Scotland, or France to be educated. They entered their horses in

¹² "Documents Concerning the Rev. Samuel Thomas, 1702-1707," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, V (January, 1904), 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁴ *S.C. Statutes at Large*, II, 366-76.

¹⁵ Henry A. M. Smith, "Purrysburgh," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, X (October, 1909), 191-92.

the events of "race week," they lined the Battery to watch their boats win in the regatta, and they decked themselves in all their finery to sit on the hard benches of the old Dock Street Theater and enjoy the pleasures afforded by the earliest theater in America. They had beautiful furniture, family portraits, jewels and plate, and books. "In many country houses there was a book-room, to use the old word; and if not, at least one or two well-filled bookcases."¹⁶ At Middleton Place, Pinckney Island, and some other plantations there were valuable collections. Randall says of these planters: "It was not necessarily a class of great wealth, even as wealth was counted in those days, but of enough means to afford travel, the possession of books, and the leisure to read them."¹⁷

But not all colonists were able to buy books, and, of those who did own private libraries, very few could afford all the new publications. The early Provincial Library that had been established with such auspicious backing had not functioned for almost a generation, and no other central library had been organized to take its place. In order to make books more available in Carolina, a group of seventeen young men met early in the year 1748 to raise funds to purchase pamphlets and magazines from England. On December 28, 1748, they organized themselves under the name of the Charles Town Library Society and made arrangements to buy books as well as pamphlets. When James Petigru delivered the oration at the society's first centennial, June 13, 1848, he said, "The

Society owes its origin to the plain citizens of a small town, and had for its object the collection of good books, and the encouragement of a taste for reading."¹⁸ An earlier historian of the Library Society wrote that "some young gentry imported books, chiefly for amusement."¹⁹ Of the seventeen young men who composed the Library Society during its first year, some were surely "plain citizens" whose names rarely appear elsewhere, while others were "gentry" whose names have been identified with the city and state throughout their history.²⁰ By 1750 the Society was well organized with officers, rules, and a respectable roster of members. This list now included many names "distinguished in the state"; e.g., Christopher Gadsden, Thomas Lynch, Henry Laurens, William Middleton, Charles Pinckney, Andrew Rutledge, John Moultrie, and others.

Immediately after its organization, the society applied for a charter, but it was not until eight years later that the

¹⁸ James Petigru Carson, *Life, Letters and Speeches of James Louis Petigru* (Washington: W. H. Loder milk & Co., 1920), p. 266.

¹⁹ Charleston Library Society, *Rules and By-laws of the Charleston Library Society, Together with the Acts of the General Assembly of South Carolina for Incorporating the Society; and a Brief Historical Introduction* (Charleston: Robert Wells, 1762), p. iv.

²⁰ Original members: Alexander Baron, Martin Brailsford, Samuel Brailsford, Robert Brisbane, William Burrows, John Cooper, Paul Doux saint, James Gridlay, William Logan, Alexander McCauley, Dr. Patrick McKie, Thomas Middleton, John Neufville, Thomas Sacheverell, John Sinclair, Charles Steverson, Peter Timothy. Anne King Gregorie, "The First Decade of the Charleston Library Society," *Proceedings of The South Carolina Historical Association*, V (1935), p. 3; Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 378; and "Original Rules and Members of the Charleston Library Society," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XXIII (July, 1922), 163, give these names. Miss Gregorie and Carson, *op. cit.*, p. 206, add the names of Samuel and Joseph Wragg, Jr.

¹⁶ Mrs. Harriott Horry Rutledge Ravenel, *Charleston: the Place and the People* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1907), p. 389.

¹⁷ Charles W. Randall, "The Southern Heritage," in *Culture in the South*, ed. W. T. Couch (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), p. 15.

instrument was finally delivered into the hands of the members. At the meeting of the society on April 4, 1759, the rules and by-laws that covered both the organization and use of the library were ratified.²¹

The constitution provided for the usual officers and a librarian. Members were expected to take an active part in the affairs of the society, to attend meetings, and to hold offices to which they were elected, and those refusing to do so were charged a fine. Country members were excused from these fines.

Immediately upon election to membership in the society, the new member was required to pay "Fifty Pounds current money of South Carolina" as an initiation fee and thereafter weekly dues of "five shillings current money until he had paid a total of two hundred pounds, then he paid only two shillings per week." If he fell behind in his weekly contribution for six months, the rights and privileges of active membership were denied him, and, if he continued to be in arrears, he was "utterly barred and excluded from being a member of this Society."

The circulation rules are reminiscent of those of the old Provincial Library. They read:

A member shall, at the stated hours, have free access to the Library, and to the use of any of the books or instruments therein. He may also take out of the Library any one, books or pamphlet, or any number of volumes of one work he chooses to read, giving a receipt for the same. . . . which shall be returned to the Library within four days if a pamphlet, twelve days if a Duodecimo or Octavo, sixteen days if a Quarto, and within twenty-four days if a Folio, allowing to every country member a farther time, at the rate of twelve hours for every six miles between Charleston and the place of his residence.

²¹ Charleston Library Society, *op. cit.*, p. 1. This citation covers all subsequent quotations from these rules.

The importance of the planter, or country member, is reflected in these circulation rules and in the regulations regarding forfeits for not filling offices to which members were elected. Though he lived at a distance from Charleston, he was still considered a part of local society. Rules were adjusted to suit his convenience and regulations were modified so that he might not only participate in Charleston life but also enrich town activities by his presence.

Several administrative questions beset the society in the eighteenth century: policies of book selection, return of books, payment of arrears, employment of a librarian, selection of a bookdealer, the printing of a catalog, and the housing of the books. These problems recur more or less regularly in the rules and by-laws, in advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette*, and in the minutes of the society.

All the members participated in the process of book selection. The rules stated that "any sum not exceeding One Hundred Pounds sterling may be laid out yearly in books and such mathematical or philosophical instruments as the Society shall judge proper." Books and instruments to be purchased were "proposed at one general meeting and agreed to the next." A spirited debate over the purchase of the classics was carried on for five meetings in 1764 and 1765.²² It was proposed that £70 of the £100 allowed for books be spent on "the classics, all the Ancient Greek and Latin authors down to the IV century, inclusive, as well Ecclesiastical as others, and the most Eminent Philologists and Critics upon them." The amount was finally

²² Charleston Library Society, "Journal Minutes of the Charleston Library Society" (MS in the Charleston Library Society, Charleston, S.C.), January, April, and July, 1764, and April and July, 1765. This citation covers all quotations from the minutes of the society.

reduced to £30, and a list of the classics was drawn up. This list was sent to the bookseller in London with instructions to spend £30 annually until all the titles had been bought. The remainder of the book fund was spent on books of general and current interest. Miss FitzSimons, librarian of the Charleston Library Society, says of the members: "They wished to keep in touch with a mature civilization, the history and progress of the world, and then, as now, they wanted new publications."²³

The society published numerous catalogs. The first one, probably the earliest of the sort to be published in America, was authorized at the meeting on July 4, 1759, but did not appear until 1770. Two years later an appendix, or supplement, to the catalog was issued.

The library was housed for twenty years in rooms lent to it, rent free, by Mr. Gabriel Manigault. Just before the Revolution Josiah Quincy visited Charleston and recorded his impressions of these quarters as "a handsome, spacious room, containing a very valuable collection of books, prints, globes, etc."²⁴ These rooms were used until 1778, when an extensive fire destroyed the building and most of the books. After the new State House was completed in 1792, the rooms of its upper story were put at the disposal of the society, and they were used until 1836, when the society moved into its own building.

South Carolina's relations with England were satisfactory, and the colony hoped until the end of the Colonial period to settle its differences with the

mother-country amicably. The members of the Charleston Library Society were the leading citizens of the colony; men who were loyal to England but who were conscious of the unrest and dissatisfaction among the colonists and who, when the final movement for independence came, threw in their lot with the other colonies to present a united front to England. When revolution appeared imminent, these men made preparations to protect their books when trouble came. At the regular October meeting in 1775 a motion was made and seconded that "the Society do take under consideration whether the books shall be removed from the Library Room to any and what place during the present commotion," but not enough members were present to take action, and a special meeting was called for October 9, 1775. Thirty-one members attended and voted unanimously that "proper boxes or cases be immediately got and sufficient for removing the Books in case of any danger and that the same be lodged in the Library Room for that purpose." There is no record of the books having been packed in the boxes. If they were, it did not make it possible to remove them quickly enough, for three years later all but 185 of the valuable collection were destroyed by the fire mentioned above.

The Revolution hampered the activities of the society, but it did not halt them. New members continued to join the society, and its regular meetings were held. There was one meeting, however, that had to be omitted, for an entry of July, 1776, reads "M. B. no meeting in July, the colony being then invaded."

After the Revolution the society collected some debts that had been outstanding for several years and had a balance of about \$11,000. Of this sum, it subscribed \$6,400 to the Bank of the

²³ Ellen M. FitzSimons, "Address before the South Carolina Library Association, 1933" (unpublished MS in the Charleston Library Society).

²⁴ Josiah Quincy, *Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, Junior of Massachusetts Bay, 1744-1775*, ed. Eliza Susan Quincy (3d ed.; Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1875), p. 103.

United States and spent the rest for books. These books were purchased in 1792 and formed the foundation of the present library. The decision to restock the library attracted members whose financial contributions and influence gave added impetus to the reawakened interest in the society. A brief tabulation of the size of the collection gives an idea of its growth (Table 1). The collection had grown from its meager beginnings in 1748 to a creditable collection by 1778, when the disastrous fire of that year reduced it to fewer than two hundred volumes. Slowly, during the Revolution, the collection was increased as the funds of the society permitted. The recovery of funds and the large purchase of books in 1792 restored the library to its former size, and from then until the War between the States its growth was steady.

"Reading was a serious occupation, not a pastime, for the members of the Library Society,"²⁵ and they undertook to assemble books of real value and other items that would increase their knowledge of themselves and the world they lived in. The society early enlarged its scope of activities. Besides books, pamphlets, and newspapers, it owned "a microscope, a concave mirror, an air pump, a telescope, a camera obscura, and a hydrostatic balance"²⁶ which it lent to its members. This interest in science led the society to begin a "natural history" collection of South Carolina which culminated in the founding of the Charleston Museum, the oldest museum in America. In Dr. Ramsay's report of the fire of 1778 and its effect on the Library Society, he recorded the loss of "many

specimens of natural history"²⁷ as well as books and other articles.

An early goal of the Charleston Library Society was the founding of an academy or college for the colony. The purpose of the society, as stated in its petition for incorporation in 1750, was "for purchasing Books and laying the Foundation of their future Academy."²⁸ The society soon found that the establishment of a college was too ambitious an undertaking for a private organization, but, as individuals and as a group, the members of the society continued to

TABLE 1*

Year	Number of Volumes
Before 1778	About 5,000
1778	185
1790	342
1808	4,500
1811	7,000
1826	12,000
1850	18,000
1876	15,000

* Charleston Library Society, *Catalog of the Books Belonging to the Charleston Library Society* (Charleston: The News and Courier Book and Job Printers, 1876), p. iv.

work for the establishment of the college on a broader basis.

John MacKenzie, a member, bequeathed his valuable library to it even before it was a reality, and Benjamin Smith left it £500 sterling. Many members of the society were in the General Assembly, and there they supported legislation which led to its establishment. In 1785 an act was passed creating three colleges in the state, one for each section.²⁹ The College of Charleston alone was organized under this act.

The fortunes of the Charleston Library Society fluctuated with local circumstances. During periods of economic

²⁵ Frederick P. Bowes, *The Culture of Early Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), p. 64.

²⁶ James Harold Easterby, *A History of the College of Charleston* (1935), p. 4.

²⁷ Ramsay, *op. cit.*, II, 379 n.

²⁸ S.C. (Colony) Common House of Assembly *MS Journal*, Vol. XXVI (February 2, 1750-51).

²⁹ S.C. *Statutes at Large*, VIII, 674.

well-being the library prospered, it bought many and valuable books, and its funds were sufficient to lend on good security; in times of depression it managed to keep its organization intact, to add a few choice books, and to safeguard its investment by rigid economies. It suffered heavy losses as a result of fire and invasions, but each time its property was destroyed it started afresh to build up its collection of books and to carry on its broad and varied activities. Thus it has functioned continuously from 1748 to the present day—nearly two hundred years.

Other libraries were established in Charleston during the early years of the nineteenth century: the Apprentices' Library Society, the Franklin Library Society, the Ramsay Library and Debating Society, the Washington Library Society, and the Trinitarian Universalist and Library Society.³⁰

THE GEORGETOWN LIBRARY SOCIETY

Charleston was the first permanent settlement in Carolina, and the center of the life of the colony and state. Plantations were developed up and down the coast and inland along the rivers, and small communities were laid out in a great fan-shaped area with Charleston as the hub, Georgetown on Winyah Bay about sixty miles to the north, Beaufort on St. Helena's Sound approximately the same distance to the south, and Walterboro some forty miles to the west. Each of these towns became a center for the surrounding area, but all looked to Charleston for leadership and patterned themselves on society found there.

The planters who lived near Georgetown specialized in indigo and were ever alert to improve its strain and cultivation. To implement this purpose, they

organized, about 1740, an agricultural and social club, the Winyah Indigo Society.³¹ This society became so prosperous that it was able to establish, in 1757, an excellent charity school which was attended by children of the planters and townspeople as well as the poor.³²

The members of the Winyah Indigo Society were not content to furnish education to the youth of the community without also making some provision to supply books to the adult population of Georgetown. Many of them had libraries of their own, but, like the men in Charleston, they wanted more books and especially newspapers that recorded happenings of the world. In 1800 the Winyah Indigo Society sponsored the organization of the Georgetown Library Society. This society was to secure, in addition to books:

Newspapers from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Knoxville, Lexington, Columbia, and the *Georgetown Gazette*; two weekly papers from London (one of which to contain the debates of Parliament) the *London Magazine* and the *Gazette of Leyden*; also critical reviews, and such periodicals published, and pamphlets as they shall think worthy the attention of the society; likewise maps of the four quarters of the globe.³³

The society met in a room rented from the local printer, who also acted as librarian. Books were bought in London, Philadelphia, and Charleston, and donations were received from members and

³¹ Winyah Indigo Society, *Rules of the Winyah Indigo Society of Georgetown, S.C. with a Short History of the Society and a List of Living and Deceased Members from 1755 to 1938* (Charleston: Walker, Evans & Cogswell, 1938), p. 11.

³² Charter of the Winyah Indigo Society, in the library of the Winyah Indigo Society, Georgetown, S.C., and *S.C. Statutes at Large*, VIII, 110.

³³ Minutes quoted in "The Georgetown Library Society," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XXV (April, 1924), 96.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 335, 266, 326, 352, 366.

their friends. During the War between the States the books were removed from the library and scattered.

THE BEAUFORT LIBRARY SOCIETY

To the south of Charleston, the town of Beaufort became the economic and social center of the lower part of the colony. Immediately after the Revolution a movement was started there to endow a seminary, and on December 19, 1795, the trustees of Beaufort College were given a charter.³⁴ Provision was made by the trustees for the purchase of "such Books and Instruments as may be necessary for the grammar school and college at their first commencement."³⁵

These books in the college were not sufficient for the people in the community, and here, too, a library society was organized. No exact date can be established for the creation of this society, but the program of the laying of the cornerstone of the college attests to its existence on November 4, 1802; the Beaufort Library Society was one of the local organizations invited to participate in this ceremony.³⁶ A petition for incorporation was presented to the legislature on November 15, 1803, but it was not until 1807 that it was granted.³⁷

The Beaufort Library Society had a long and satisfactory history of service to the area. It and the library of Beaufort College provided scholarly resources to students and professional men alike. The Reverend Richard Fuller called the library of the college "the most choice collection of modern and ancient classics I

have seen for a long time."³⁸ As in Georgetown, the Beaufort Library Society lost all its books when the town was captured by the Federal fleet.

THE WALTERBORO LIBRARY SOCIETY

About forty miles west of Charleston in a district of higher land was the town of Walterboro. The people of the low country left their malaria-infested swamp lands during the summer and moved to higher, drier portions of the state. Walterboro, Stateburgh, and Pendleton were among the stopping-places frequented by coast families, and they acquired many of the characteristics of Charleston society.

One of the earliest activities in Walterboro was the organization of the Walterboro Library Society. Its petition for incorporation is not dated, but it was presented to the legislature on November 30, 1821, and granted on December 20 of that year.³⁹ Local historical authorities set the date of its founding as probably 1820.

The society must have grown in size and importance. In 1826, when Walterboro was incorporated, its boundaries extended "three quarters of a mile in every direction from the place where the library house now stands."⁴⁰ The designation of the library as the geographical center of the town attests to its place in the life of the community. The society was disbanded in 1833, but two other libraries were established after the War between the States and the present library still occupies the original "library house."

Other library societies were organized

³⁴ *S.C. Statutes at Large*, VIII, 189.

³⁵ Beaufort College, "Journal of the Proceedings of the Trustees of Beaufort College from Their First Incorporation in 1795" (MS in the Beaufort Township Library, Beaufort, S.C.), August 1, 1803.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, November 4, 1802.

³⁷ *S.C. Statutes at Large*, VIII, 244.

³⁸ Mabel Runnette, "The Story of Three Libraries in Beaufort, S.C." (MS in the Beaufort Township Library, Beaufort, S.C.).

³⁹ *S.C. Statutes at Large*, VIII, 320.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

in the South Carolina low country, that portion of the state below Columbia and lying along the coast, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Two of the famous sea islands, Edisto and James, were large enough in area and population to support independent library societies. The Edisto Island Library Society had assets of \$5,000 when it applied for incorporation.⁴¹

Between Charleston and Beaufort was a section known as Indian Land. It had no particular town as its center but was a community of uncertain boundaries where the Indians had lived. A library bearing its name was incorporated in 1816,⁴² but no further records of its activities remain.

Four other library societies were organized in the low country: the Republican Circulating Library of Barnwell located at the courthouse there, the Buck Springs Library Society of St. George, the Pineville Library Society, and the Williamsburg Library Society of Kingstree. Local and state historians list the library at Kingstree among the assets of the town from 1816 until 1843.⁴³

In the whole low country there developed, on plantations and in towns, replicas of life in and around Charleston. Social customs, modes of entertainment, religious and educational mores, and institutions all bore the stamp of the city. As society changed and developed in Charleston, these changes and developments became apparent in the life of the outlying areas. The creation of library societies is typical of this trend. The

Charleston Library Society, organized in 1748, set the pattern for the other societies that were established as soon as communities were economically able to support library service. They varied, of course, with the peculiar conditions of their immediate localities; but all were basically similar in their desire to procure and distribute more books and thus provide for the improvement and welfare of their community.

THE SOCIETY HILL LIBRARY SOCIETY

To the north of Georgetown, along the Peedee River, lies a region known in the state as the Welsh Neck. Here the Welsh settled in 1737 and laid out a town which they called Society Hill. The land about it was rich and fertile and supported a prosperous farming community.

In the first years of the Revolution the people of the district organized the St. David's Society to provide an academy for their children. After this school had become well established, members of the society became interested in books as adjuncts to education, and, about 1822, twelve of them founded a neighborhood library, the Society Hill Library Society.

The rules and regulations of the society were drawn up according to the needs and conveniences of the membership. Society Hill, where the library building was located, was small, and most of the members lived in other parts of the county. They were permitted to withdraw several books at a time, so that if they finished reading one book before they returned to town, there would be others for them to read. Members were forbidden to lend books out of their families, but nonmembers of the society were given borrowing privileges upon payment of \$5.00 annually.

A committee of three members was elected to purchase books, and so impor-

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁴³ Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina, Including a View of Its Natural, Civil, and Military History, General and Particular* (Charleston: Hurlbert & Lloyd, 1826), p. 363; and William Gilmore Simms, *The Geography of South Carolina* (Charleston: Babcock & Co., 1843), p. 142.

tant was this committee that its chairman presided over the society if the regularly elected president were absent. Books were bought in Philadelphia, sent to Charleston, and reshipped to Society Hill by way of Winyah Bay and the Peedee River.⁴⁴

The society issued several catalogs. The first was in manuscript and was made in October, 1826, soon after the library was organized. It listed 760 titles and was arranged in an arbitrary fashion according to the fixed location of the books on the shelves.

Many of the valuable old books and magazines are still in the library building to give testimony to the taste and intellectual curiosity of the members of the Society Hill Library Society.

THE LIBRARIES IN PENDLETON

Farther westward, across the fall line and into the up country, was Pendleton. This district was another of the summer retreats for the low country people and acquired many characteristics of the coast.

Early in the nineteenth century a number of activities were carried on there to promote the general welfare. The Pendleton Farmers' Society was organized in 1815 to study the conservation of soils, the prevention of erosion, and the improvement of agriculture.⁴⁵ It built a hall that has been used for over a hundred years by community organizations of all types, published a magazine, the *Farmer and Planter*, and was active in the establishment of Clemson, the state agriculture college.

⁴⁴ Society Hill Library Society, "Rules and Minutes," copied by Mr. Ned Coker and published in the *Darlington News and Press*, September 2, 1926 ff., from the originals now unavailable in a vault in a defunct bank in Darlington, S.C.

⁴⁵ *Pendleton Farmers' Society* (Atlanta: Foote & Davis Co., 1908), p. 16.

The *Pendleton Messenger* was published by John Miller, who was connected with the publication of the famous Junius letters in London. It reflected life in the Pendleton district from 1816 to 1849, when its publication was suspended.

Another evidence of concern for the common good was a plan for a publicly supported county circulating library. On December 17, 1808, the South Carolina Legislature enacted a bill to provide "a public circulating library, under such rules and regulations as shall to them [the county commissioners] seem proper, and most likely to produce the greatest public utility."⁴⁶ The commissioners were given title to certain state lands in the Pendleton district which were to be sold to support this library.

No library was ever established under this act. The intent of the legislature was to set up in Pendleton a permanent collection of books that would circulate to all residents of the district. The interpretation of the act by the commissioners emphasized service to the district and the dissemination of knowledge, rather than the channel through which this could be accomplished. Therefore, after studying the problems incident to the organization of a library, the commissioners recommended that another agency, an academy, be organized as a more feasible means of carrying out the original purpose of the legislature.⁴⁷

It was not until 1825 that the academy was chartered and the circulating library merged with it. By this act, the commissioners of the library became trustees of the Pendleton Academy. All property of the library was relinquished

⁴⁶ *S.C. Statutes at Large*, V, 578.

⁴⁷ MS petition of the Commissioners of the Pendleton Circulating Library, in the South Carolina Historical Commission, Columbia, S.C.

to the academy, and a library was set up for the school.⁴⁸

In 1828 a subscription library was organized by residents of Pendleton. The library was never incorporated, but an old minutes-book gives the record of the first five years of its existence. The society began as a reading circle that disposed of its books by lottery after they had been read by all members. This plan evidently did not please the members, for they voted to let the books accumulate into a permanent book stock, subject to further reading by anyone.⁴⁹

The circulation period for books from this library was one week, with the privilege of renewal for an additional week. This was much shorter than the time allowed in the low country, but here there was no need for extra time, since the members lived within the little village. The extensive plantation system of the coast was not found in the Piedmont section, and so concessions to country members did not affect the rules and regulations of institutions.

Nonmembers might use the society's books under the following conditions. A deposit covering the cost of the book might be made at the time the book was taken from the collection, or an advance deposit of two dollars per year or one dollar and twenty-five cents for six months might be left with the society. Besides this deposit, which was redeemable, the nonmember user of the library paid a fee of six and a quarter cents per week per volume read.

Books were bought through Charleston bookstores and sent up the country

by stage. One of the bills in the minutes-book is for one dollar "for freight for the last parcel [of books] from Charleston."

Though records of library development in Pendleton are fragmentary, public and private papers reveal in this small, upcountry village a consciousness of the value of books and the concept of public responsibility for the support of libraries.

OTHER LIBRARIES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

After the Revolution, the inland sections of South Carolina increased in population and wealth and acquired some of the characteristics of the coast regions. Upcountry families joined with one another to provide community institutions of intellectual and social import. Schools, or academies, were established to train the youth, and library societies were organized to furnish reading for adults.

Twenty-one of these library societies, located in the middle and upper part of South Carolina, were incorporated by the legislature between 1800 and 1830.⁵⁰ Only fragmentary information remains about most of them: in some cases local records and references in contemporary writings enable one to reconstruct their histories; others are known only by their petitions for incorporation. All of them were privately owned, or subscription, libraries and in many towns were established on the same basis as the schools.

Stateburg and Camden, Columbia and Winnsboro, Newberry and Lexington had creditable academies and library societies that were recorded among their assets by two contemporary historians, Mills and Simms.⁵¹ The members of these societies petitioned the legislature

⁴⁸ *S.C. Statutes at Large*, VIII, 345.

⁴⁹ Pendleton Library Society, "Minutes" (MS minutes in the Pendleton Library, Pendleton, S.C.). This citation covers all quotations from these minutes in the following pages of this paper.

⁵⁰ *S.C. Statutes at Large*, VIII.

⁵¹ Mills, *op. cit.*; and Simms, *op. cit.*

for incorporation, and their petitions were granted.⁵² Without exception these library societies were considered instruments of general culture. A typical example of this attitude is found in the petition of the members of the Lexington Library Society which states that the society "will be ultimately of great benefit to themselves and the community at large."

Columbia was the capital of the state and the site of the newly created South Carolina College. Mills records that there were in Columbia an Apprentice Library Society and two circulating libraries, besides the college library and that attached to the state house.⁵³ There is no other record of the Apprentice Library Society or the second circulating library. The one attached to the state house was the legislative library that was created to supply books to the law-makers, and the college library was a part of the South Carolina College.

At Laurens, Sumter, Union, and Abbeville library societies were incorporated in the early years of the nineteenth century. They were still active forces in their communities in 1843, when Simms included them in his *Geography of South Carolina*.

The contemporary historian, Mills, left accounts of two library societies, one in Greenville and the other in Edgefield.⁵⁴ The society in Edgefield, the Edgefield Female Library Society, was one of two societies that had women members. The society in Pendleton was the other.

Six other libraries were organized, but no mention of them has been found out-

side of legal documents. These attest to their existence and indicate that the societies had become well established in regard to membership, financial resources, and book stock. Manuscript petitions and acts of incorporation are extant for the Beersheba Library Society of York district, the Franklin Library Society of Fairfield County, the Fishing Creek Library Society of Chester district, the Cambridge Library Society of Ninety-six, the Chatham Library Society of Cheraw, and the Hamburg Library Society in the present town of North Augusta.⁵⁵

Two of the library societies that were incorporated are known only by name, with their locations uncertain. These are the Bethel Library Society and the Fork Shoals Library Society.

These twenty-one library societies were located in a broad belt that coincided with the fall line and lower Piedmont region of South Carolina. This large number, and those that must have been established but left no record, give evidence of the rapid expansions of the up country and its social and cultural development. Besides these, there were the eleven other societies organized in the low country between 1800 and 1830, making thirty-two about which some records remain.

CONCLUSIONS

From this brief sketch of library development in South Carolina from 1700 to 1830, certain tendencies and relationships are apparent. Some of these are inherent in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century society in general, some in details of local South Carolina life, and

⁵² MS petitions in the South Carolina Historical Commission, Columbia, S.C.; and *S.C. Statutes at Large*, VIII.

⁵³ Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 707.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 531, 578.

⁵⁵ MS petitions of library societies in the South Carolina Historical Commission, Columbia, S.C., and *S.C. Statutes at Large*, VIII.

others in economic and cultural factors in the colony and later the state.

One of the most obvious of these trends is the establishment of the library as an expression of the society in which it developed. South Carolina kept in close touch with England and modeled its behavior after that of the mother-country. Books and libraries were among the things that characterized the type of English life reproduced in Carolina, and they became a part of the social pattern there.

Another noticeable relationship was the marked association between the church, the school, and the library. In some instances the relationship was very definite, in others the connection was tenuous, but always there was the influence of one creating an atmosphere from which the other was a natural outgrowth.

Library societies were found in communities with a well-established economy, a sense of permanency, and a cultured, refined society. Though there were only a few people of great wealth in South Carolina, there were many families in comfortable circumstances. When the number of such families increased in a neighborhood so that the financial status of the group was assured, educational and cultural institutions were set up.

The influence of local conditions upon the administration of the library was marked. The living and working habits of the society members, their tastes, the size of the book, means of transportation—these were reflected in the rules and regulations that were formulated for the control of the societies and the use of books. Flexibility of library organization

permitted the establishment of institutions that were keyed to the needs and peculiarities of the various parts of the state.

Except for the Provincial Library and the proposed Pendleton County Circulating Library, all libraries were privately owned and supported by subscription societies. For that reason the book resources of a community did not serve the whole population but only a limited group within the area. However, in some localities persons who were not members of the library societies were permitted to use their books.

An important point to be considered in this study of libraries is that this was a new country. Cultural tastes had to be brought from the old world, even as material things were imported. This included a liking for books and reading.

"In any age of any society the study of history, like other social activities, is governed by the dominant tendencies of the time and the place."⁵⁶ In this history of libraries in South Carolina it has been necessary to look beyond the biographical record of the various established libraries and to determine the trends in the colony and later in the state, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, that created in the people a desire for books, a need, not only for privately owned books, but for reading materials organized for the use of many. This desire was so powerful that it became an activating force in South Carolina and transformed what might have been a passive wish for books into functioning library service.

⁵⁶ Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (2d ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 1.

